

in 1569, "every one presumes much of himself; whatever he imagines, he boldly demands, and if he does not obtain it at once he sets up a great clamour." Authority is disputed, resisted, attacked, overthrown. The sceptre is no longer the emblem of power, of reverent obedience. The monarch seems to exist on sufferance. The universal license of thought and action is to some extent due to the fact that the king, the government is weak ; it is also due to the genius of Protestantism, which has awakened conscience and quickened the sense of right. Nay, according to the ambassador, it has affected the national character. " The people of France has hitherto been regarded as gentle and worth almost nothing for war, with the exception of the Gascons, who have always borne a martial reputation. At present it is not so. In this war of religion, which affects everybody, all France has taken arms, and blood flows in abundance. On this account they have become emboldened and courageous." The root of the evil lies, according to the same authority, in the fact that adequate repressive measures had not been taken from the beginning. Surely Francis I. had shed heretic blood enough, at any rate at Paris and in those Vaudois valleys ? The ambassador is apparently not aware that conscience, and not force, is the true mistress of the world. Conscience, however, is, according to the apologists of absolute kings and traditional creeds, the monopoly of the established Church and the doctors of the Sorbonne and the Parliament. The Protestant is a heretic, and has no right to a conscience, so long as the Sorbonne and the Parliament are the arbiters of religious belief, and have the right and the power to burn him. This is the view, too, of partisan Romanist historians, who are never tired of abusing these rascally, perfidious " Lutherans," though they ought to know better by this time. It is a vain pretension, and means simply that what is orthodox according to pope and priest is eternal and immutable. Happily, this pretension has not succeeded in stifling religious and intellectual progress, based not on the impregnable rock of St Peter, but on the eternal rock of conviction. It did not succeed in France for nearly a century and a half at least; did not succeed ultimately either, for the Protestant was resolved to fight for his convictions, even against all the forces of both